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AUTHOR Myers, Douglas D.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This document presents one in a series of twenty-three case studies derived from in-depth interviews using a sampling of former participants in the Mountain-Plains program, a residential, family-based education program developed to improve the economic potential and lifestyle of selected student families in a six-state area. Each case study contains the following information about a specific student family: biographical data; participation in the educational and community programs; home, income, placement, and employment data; stated problems and/or satisfactions; summaries of the participants' personal and social development; individual ratings of the program; scripts of personal interviews; interviewer comments; and individual test scores and self-assessments. This document presents specific findings on Charles White who entered the program with severe marital problems. The follow-up study reports that he successfully completed occupational training and is currently employed. (Names in these studies have been changed.) Two other documents are included in the series: a report which examines work and income variables for the group (ED 110 610) and a report which summarizes group findings on personal and social development (CE 014 681). Specific documentation for the instruments utilized in the study are included in both of these related documents. (BM)

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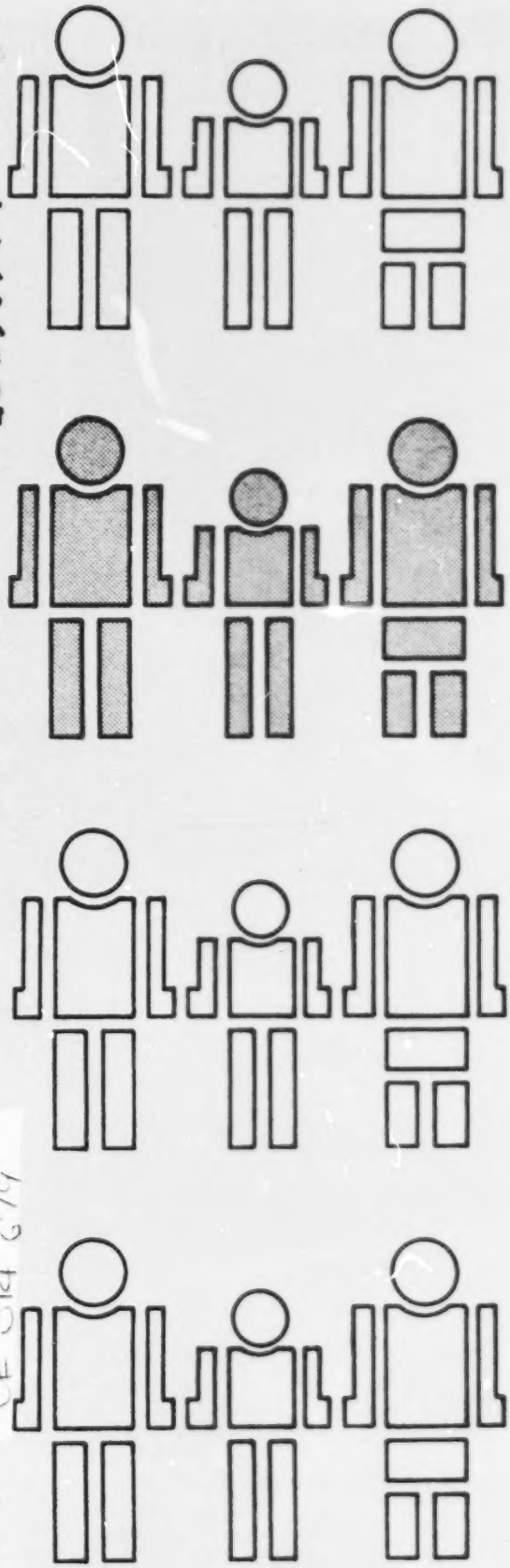

CASE STUDY REPORT #23

CHARLES WHITE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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MOUNTAIN PLAINS EDUCATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM INC.

CASE STUDY REPORT

CHARLES WHITE

Authors:

Douglas D. Myers
Rowan W. Conrad
David A. Coyle

Series Editor:

Michael C. Fenenbock

August, 1975

A Product of Research Services Division
David A. Coyle, Director

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PREFACE

Reports in this series are derived from in depth interviews using a stratified random sample of former Mountain-Plains students. Interviews were conducted from November, 1974 through January, 1975 by Mountain-Plains professional research staff. Case Study Report 1 examines Work and Income variables for the group. Case Study Reports 2 through 24 include specific findings on each family included in the sampling. Case Study Report 25 summarizes group findings on personal and social development. A summary of the research design for the Case Study Reports is documented in: Coyle, David A.; Conrad, Rowan W.; and Myers, Douglas D. In Depth Case Study of Exited Families: A Summary of the Research Design for Phase 1 Preliminary Effects Study. Glasgow, Montana: Mountain-Plains Press, 1974. Specific documentation for the instruments utilized in the study are included in either Case Study Report 1 or Case Study Report 25. All names in these studies have been changed.

Michael C. Fenenbock
Series Editor

David A. Coyle
Director, Research
Services Division

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CASE STUDY REPORT

CHARLES WHITE

BACKGROUND

The White family entered Mountain-Plains from Alms, Nebraska in March, 1973. Both Charles and his wife, Jody, are high school graduates. Their son, Charles Jr., was approximately 7 months old at the time of application. Charles' work history included mainly short term jobs as a manual laborer. In the three years prior to entering Mountain-Plains, Charles averaged slightly over $200 per month in income--ranging from $100 per month as a self-employed carpenter to $271 per month as a laborer. The total family income listed for employment in the year previous to Mountain-Plains amounted to $1800 while family debts totaled $100.

Asked by the pre program interviewer why he lost his last job, Charles explained, "I took my wife to Omaha to see a doctor and my brother-in-law told my boss that I'd changed jobs so my boss fired me." Charles expressed interest in electronics, or electrician training, although he had some previous experience/skills as a carpenter.

Jody was interested in secretarial training and said that she had some training in "secretarial" at high school. Unemployed at the time, the only work experience Jody listed in the program application was "waitress in a cafe."

The Whites were living with Charles' parents, and consequently had no cash

outlay for either rent or utilities. Although eligible, the family was not using welfare benefits, and did not have either a checking or savings account. Members of the Lutheran Church, Jody was active in the Lutheran Christian Women's League; however, she did not hold an office in that organization.

In general, the pre program interviewer believed the Whites would make "an excellent Mountain-Plains family," noting, "Charles and Jody are an attractive young couple. Although they had many difficulties during the early months of their marriage, they both agree that they have grown up and their marriage is fine. At present he is unemployed and lives with his parents but both are determined that some way they are going to provide a better life for their child." The indications of marital stability proved to be premature.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Charles and Jody entered Mountain-Plains in March, 1973. Charles entered Social and Education Services occupational area, training as a probation and paroie aide, while Jody chose to take the support program. Charles completed his training area but Jody finished only the Family Core Curriculum. The exit report prepared by the family counselor indicated that the White family was very unstable due to extreme marital conflict. Apparently, Charles displayed considerable temper and would vent it toward his wife during disagreements. Although he indicated this feeling of hostility dissipated rather quickly, it was nevertheless, quite severe. At exit, their counselor wrote, "Even though Charles and Jody left Mountain-Plains as a couple,

there still exists a great deal of tension and ill feeling between the two. Counseling attempts were made but all were refused by both. One almost got the impression that both enjoyed or thrived on the marital discord that existed." The exit report also mentioned that more counseling time than usual was spent with the White family. Nevertheless, the family exited the program having made little or no advancement in resolving their marital difficulties. The exit employability report indicates that Charles gained the necessary skills for probation work, and reported that his on-the-job training (Work Experience) was very favorable. "Charles would be most effective in dealing with individuals rather than groups," the employability report concludes. "The one problem that Charles might face in his employability is due mainly to unsolved marital problems."

PLACEMENT

Charles and Jody exited the Mountain-Plains program and returned to Nebraska in April, 1974 where Charles obtained a job with the University of Nebraska in Lincoln--some 50 to 60 miles from their home in Alma. Since the Whites had no car, Charles would bus to Lincoln, spend the week there and return to Alma weekends.

Charles was employed as a supply clerk in the Chemistry Department earning $390 a month. He was scheduled for a 5 percent raise after being there for six months and this, along with an annual raise, would raise his earnings some $300 per year.

HOME AND INCOME

At the time of the case study interview--7 months after the Whites program exit--the family had split, and a divorce was pending. Currently, Charles is living in Hebron, Nebraska while Jody is apparently living in the Omaha area.[1]

Charles has changed jobs and is now working in Hebron for Gibsons Department Store. Employed as a group manager, Charles is required to manage the shelving displays and sales of certain sections of the store. He is paid $2.15 a hour but works an average 51 hours a week, resulting in a monthly income of approximately $480.

Charles has received no welfare benefits or unemployment compensations since Mountain-Plains. He has no investments and about $100 in debts--mainly lawyers fees stemming from the divorce. He has no savings account, or insurances, and does not use a budget. Charles has been involved in community activity working as a volunteer juvenile delinquent officer, and is also a member of the volunteer police auxiliary in Hebron. He lives in a small three room apartment that rents for $65 a month, and he pays an additional $15 a month for utilities.

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[1]Jody could not be located and, as a result, no information is available on her current situation. The last Charles has heard she was involved with another man.

As Charles lives by himself he works a large number of hours each week. He appears to be very much involved in his work and does not dwell on the fact that he and his wife are divorcing. When questioned in detail regarding the marriage, Charles said, "We had never really been all that stable. The final straw that broke it was when I was working in Lincoln and she was living in Alma." "It got to the point," Charles related, "where soon as I went out the door somebody else would be in there living with my wife until I got back on Friday nights." Evidently, the break-up was mutually agreed and amicable, although Charles reports he unsuccessfully attempted to gain custody of the child.

Charles seems fairly stable, confident of his abilities. He is concerned about his work and the people he comes in contact with. Charles' ambition is to become a private detective, the only thing "holding me back from engaging in this kind of work is the expense of getting the certification and license, because with lawyer costs and all, it costs several thousand dollars." He does, however, remain involved in social services through volunteer work with juvenile delinquents and seems fairly happy in this new life.

Greatly concerned for the welfare of his child, Charles reports he will continue attempts to gain custody. The probable success of this is extremely low, which Charles realizes, but, he says, "my boy is very important to me and is worth the effort."

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was administered to Charles in his home. (See Figure 4.) He scored slightly below the scale norm on all but two scales, moral/ethical self and personal self, on which he was slightly above the national norms. He was considerably lower than the normal population norm, and his post-exit norm, on "family self,"--he scored close to the 1st percentile. This result is interpreted to be a direct result of the recent divorce and the attendent family situation. The self-criticism scale was very close to the norm indicating that Charles was being very honest with the scale itself in the testing situation.

Charles was also administered both the Neal Seeman Powerlessness Scale and Srole Anomie Scale. (See Figure 3.) He received a scale score of zero on the powerlessness scale--some two standard deviations lower than the exited peer group mean. This indicates a strong belief that he can, in fact, control his future--perhaps a naive perception of the world in which he lives. He also received a low scale score on the Anomie Scale--scale score of one--some one standard deviation below the group mean. The fact that he scored low on alienation and powerlessness scales, when coupled with the recent divorce indicates that he is a rather exceptional person, very resilent to emotional tragedies.

During conversation with Charles, it became apparent that he considered himself a very lucky individual. Lucky in that he has a good perception

of what he wants out of life--that he is expected to produce to get what he wants and is not surprised by difficulties in attaining desired goals.

EMPLOYMENT

Charles is very positive towards work. He likes the feeling of authority and decision in making choices about the types of displays and selling items that he is in charge of. On the Work Alienation Scale, Charles produced a scale score of one, which for departed male students was the mean. The Work Motivation Scale resulted in a scale score of 17, slightly above the mean, indicating he feels that the work he is doing is much more demanding on him than others.

On the Job Description Index Charles scored 46 on work--one standard deviation above the exited group mean. On pay he produced a scale score of 17--also higher than the group mean by approximately one half standard deviation. On promotions he scored 22--one standard deviation above the mean. On supervisor and co-workers he scored one standard deviation below the group mean. In general, the JDI and the Work Satisfaction Scales seem to reinforce the interpretation that Charles enjoys the work he does, but not necessarily his co-workers or supervisors. This interpretation, however, raises a question regarding his results on the Social Perception Scale, which indicated Charles is in strong control of his work situation.

Specifically, Charles thought supervisor relations were "very good," that his overall work environment was "very good," but that his salary was

"bad." In general his job is outstanding, Charles related, it gave him high regard in the eyes of his fellow workers and the opportunity for advancement--which both the Mountain-Plains counselor and employability reports indicated as a much needed characteristic. On the negative side Charles resents the present promotions policy, "people in charge are there because they have seniority rather than the ability, and this bothers me somewhat." He likes the idea of being on his own because, "it allows me to be expressive and creative."

RATING THE MOUNTAIN-PLAINS PROGRAM

Charles rated Mountain-Plains as a positive influence in his life. When asked which areas were the most helpful or useful, Charles replied that Job Training, Career Guidance, Work Experience, Counseling, Consumer Education, and Budgeting were of the most value. The least valuable was Early Childhood, along with Math and English. (See Figure 5.) The single most helpful area, Charles recalled, was Counseling. "It allowed me to build up some self-worth and helped me support my ego."

Knowing what he now knows about Mountain-Plains, Charles said he would "very defintely" return. "I learned and it made me realize that I had an advantage on experience." His job training area, he said, could have been better, more concise and better explained to the student. Alone among those interviewed, Charles insisted that Mountain-Plains should provide more "book training." Asked to explain, Charles said his background was in-

sufficient in theory to perform adequately on a job. Asked if he would change his occupational choice now given the chance, Charles said, "No! The background that was applied was better than the average person that you ran into in the juvenile delinquent field." His Mountain-Plains training, he insists, is widely applicable.

When asked what suggestions that he would make to Career Guidance, he replied that the Social and Education Services area was good and useful except that the dictionary of occupational titles could have been "more job oriented." Counseling, he said, should be available to all new students "but it shouldn't be mandatory, because sometimes it was "a real pain in the neck because of its length." However, Counseling did help him, and it was interesting.[2]

PROBLEMS AND SATISFACTIONS

Generally Charles felt that he coped well with everyday propblems, "I have room for improvements, but I can handle almost any situation I run into."

He is well satisfied with his life, he says. He indicated that he thought he had "good breaks" since Mountain-Plains and that overall he had more "good breaks" than "bad breaks." "The divorce from my wife was probably

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[2]Charles, the coordinator of the Counseling Program reports, showed a great interest and enthusiasm for counseling theory. To the extent that on numerous occasions he scheduled after hours discussion sessions with counselors in order to gain a knowledge of their specific techniques.

in actuality a good break, because I don't have to worry about the situation any longer." His "bad break," he says, "was that job at the University of Nebraska." Charles says, "I'm much happier now working at Gibsons than I was at the university." Asked specifically about the divorce situation, he said, that "it was due mainly to putting too much trust in my wife. You know she was in one place and I was in another."

The thing giving him the most satisfaction in life is his job, and the things that gets him "down the most" are "continued criticism of the other people," and "people who're in the position to change and deal with situations that can't or don't." He said that he felt that he could control his future, make his future what "I want it to be" though realizing goals and the demands of achieving goals. Clearly, Charles has a very strong commitment to goals.

When asked about leisure activity skills Charles indicated he like to play the guitar, paint, and cook. Unfortunately, he commented, a great demand is placed on him by his current work situation, making it difficult for him to participate in other activities.

He was not extensively involved in any activities at Mountain-Plains and when asked about responsibilities he felt towards the community Charles said, "If I can help a kid, I'll do it." "The main thing about dealing with juveniles or delinquents or any type," he continued, "is that you have to deal with them straight. You try to help them correct bad social habits."

He indicated that he had a great belief in "kids" and that "in order to correct any side mess-ups, that's where you have to start."

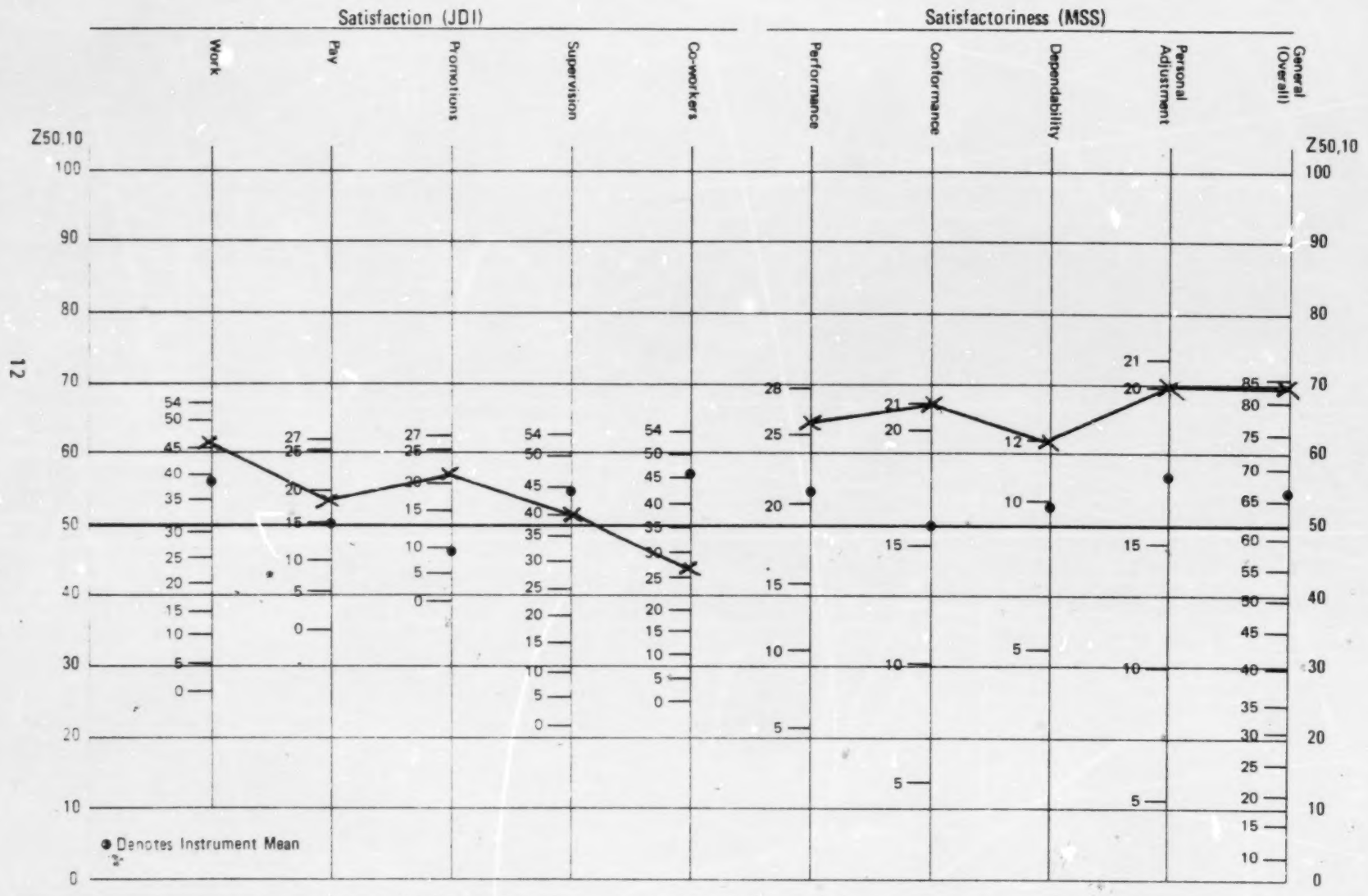
INTERVIEWER COMMENTS

Not the most successful Mountain-Plains student to ever exit, nevertheless, Charles has found an inner value, a faith in himself, a belief in what he is doing and the things that he can do. Apparently very content in his current life situation--mainly because he does not define it as a continuing situation but rather a temporary state--Charles accepts the circumstance that he finds himself in and has learned to live within its limits.

Charles was initially open, but rather cautious in the interview. He appeared to be socially aware of appropriate responses to the questions and would not answer a question immediately, but consider the alternatives and make a response accordingly. Charles is bright, looking for an outlet where he can become extensively involved. His work currently satisfies his needs for achievement, he is dedicated, more than willing to work extra hours, and apparently very competent.

Figure 1

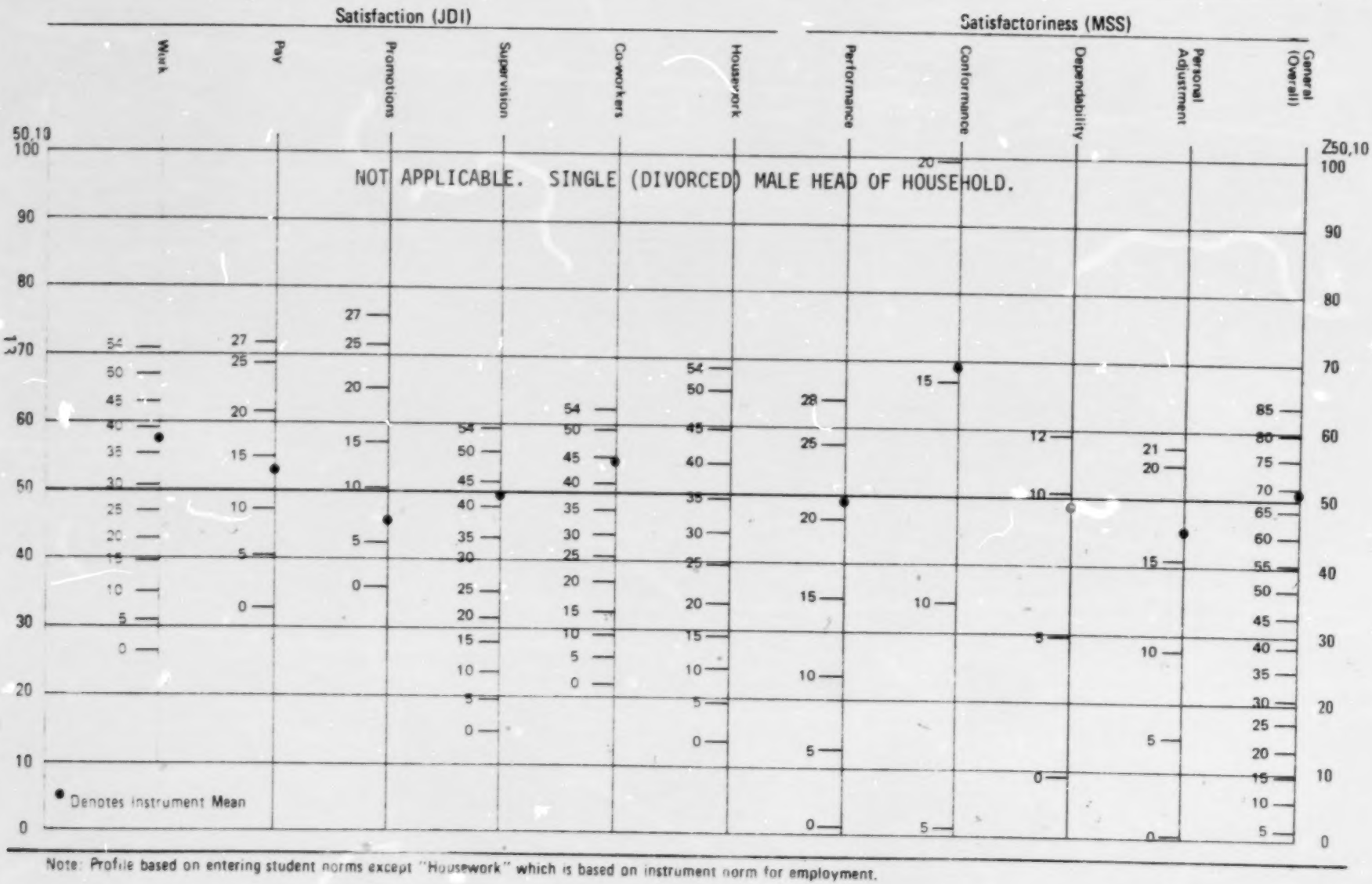
SATISFACTION AND SATISFACTORINESS – MALE



Note: Profile based on entering student scores.

Figure 2

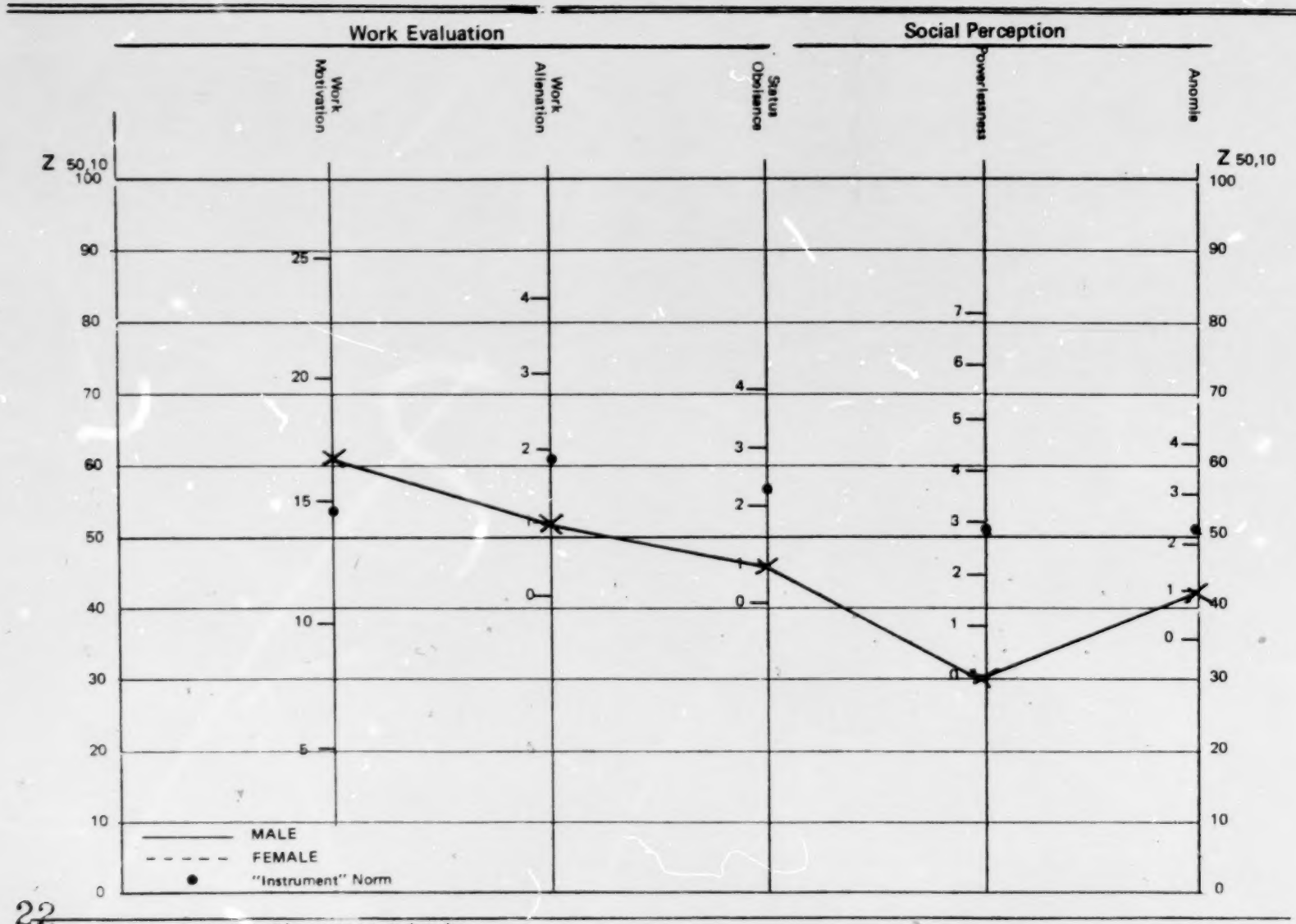
SATISFACTION AND SATISFACTORINESS – FEMALE



Note: Profile based on entering student norms except "Housework" which is based on instrument norm for employment.

Figure 3

MOTIVATION AND ALIENATION

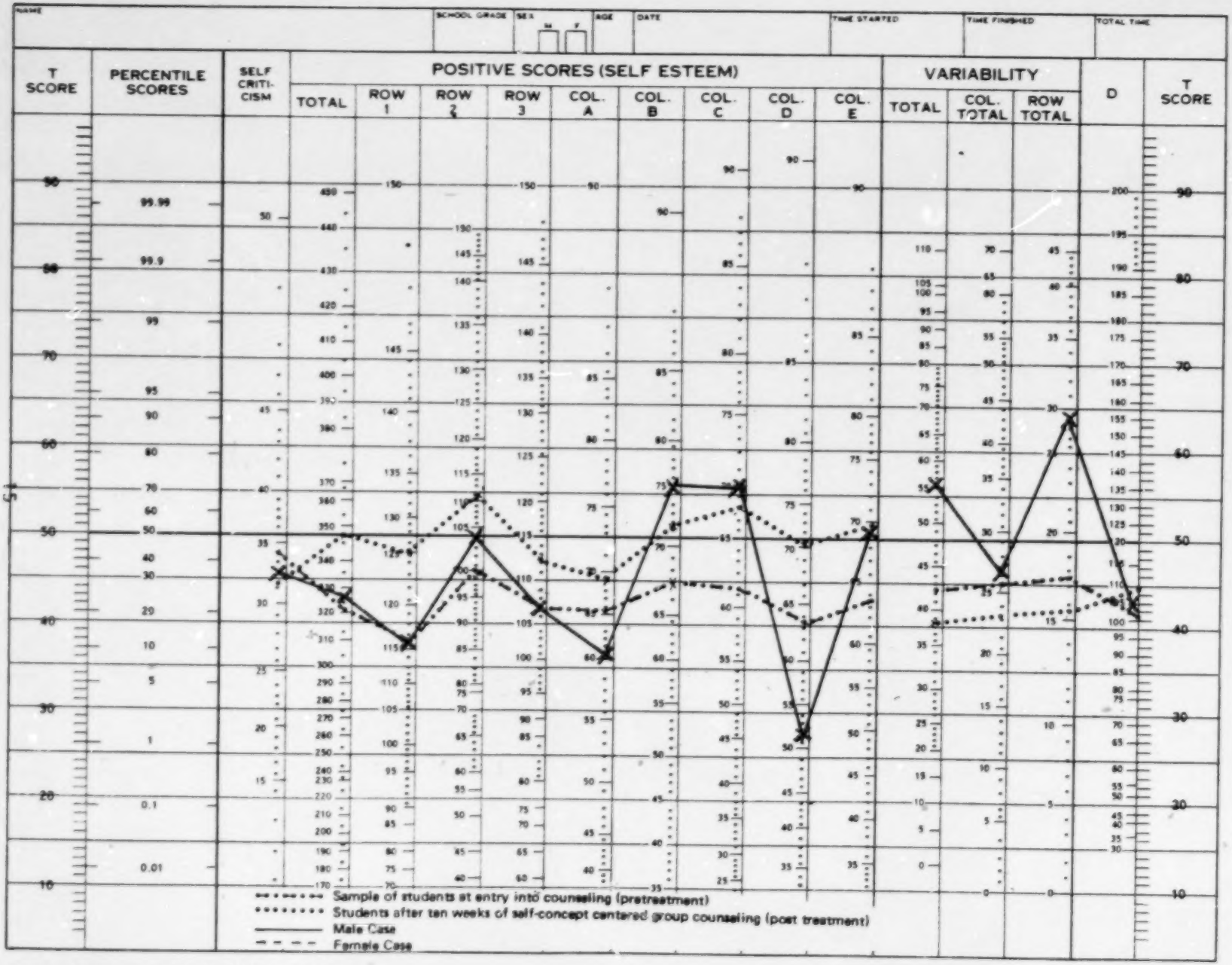


Note: Profile derived from entering student data.

Tennessee Self Concept Scale – Figure 4

PROFILE SHEET

Counseling Form



Note: This is the standard profile sheet for the TSCS.

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Male					Female			
High		Low			Low		High	
Much	Some	Little	None		None	Little	Some	Much
●- - - - - - - - - - - -				Job Training	Not Applicable. Single Male.			
		●- - - - -		Math				
		●- - - - -		English				
●- - - - - - - - - - - -				Career Guidance				
●- - - - - - - - - - - -				Work Experience				
●- - - - - - - - - - - -				Counseling				
●- - - - - - - - - - - -				Consumer Education				
	●- - - - - - - -			Community Development				
	●- - - - - - - -			Recreation				
	●- - - - - - - -			Health				
	●- - - - - - - -			Home Management				
			●-	Early Childhood				

FIGURE 5

UTILITY RATING OF MOUNTAIN-PLAINS PROGRAM ELEMENTS

TABLE 1

SELF RATING OF PERSONAL AND WORK TRAIT CHANGES

	Male		Female	
	Improved	Regressed	Improved	Regressed
Appearance			Not Applicable. Single Male.	
Punctuality				
Attendance				
Self-Confidence				
Self-Control				
Self-Knowledge				
Competence				
Industriousness				
Accuracy				
Accepts Responsibility (tasks)				
Cooperation				
Perseverance				
Social Contact				
Dependability/ Reliability				
Responsibility (personal)				
Ambition				

TABLE 2

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. "Rate Mountain-Plains as an influence in your life."

	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative
Male		o			
Female		NA			

2. "Knowing what you know now, would you have chosen Mountain-Plains?"

	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Don't Know	Probably No	Definitely No
Male	o				
Female	NA				

3. "What is your rating for your current life in general?"

	Completely Satisfied	Well Satisfied	Neither Extreme	A Little Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Male		o			
Female		NA			

4. "Rate your success:

		Completely Successful 9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Completely Unsuccessful 0
The year before M-P."	Male	Data Not Available.									
	Female										
Now."	Male										
	Female										
Five years from now."	Male										
	Female										